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EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

HIGH-SCHOOL FAILURES

On March 6 the *Journal* of Flint, Michigan, discussed at length the statistics of failures in the high school of that city. The principal of the high school had prepared a statement in response to the request of the superintendent. The table included in this statement is reproduced in full as given in the *Journal*.

	TOTAL ENROLLED		DROPPED OUT EARLY		FAILED		PASSED		PERCENT- AGE FAILED
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
<i>By grades—</i>									
Ninth.....	285	428	38	50	68	42	179	336	17.6
Tenth.....	256	352	38	40	63	54	155	258	22.1
Eleventh.....	140	227	20	12	26	18	94	197	13.1
Twelfth.....	122	142	8	7	12	14	102	121	10.4
Total.....	803	1,149	104	109	169	128	530	912	17.1
<i>By departments—</i>									
English.....	161	254	15	28	30	21	116	205	13.7
Latin-Greek....	67	136	24	18	20	10	23	108	18.6
French-German...	50	141	11	7	6	5	33	129	6.3
History.....	126	137	18	12	25	18	83	107	18.4
Mathematics...	186	234	23	27	50	41	113	166	33.7
Science.....	135	110	8	8	22	7	105	95	12.2
Commercial....	78	137	5	9	16	26	57	102	20.9
Total.....	803	1,149	104	109	169	128	530	912	17.1
<i>By teachers—</i>									
A.....	29	51	3	5	2	2	24	44	5.5
B.....	47	77	4	8	8	4	35	65	10.7
C.....	45	49	8	3	8	6	29	40	16.8
D.....	51	83	1	0	7	15	43	68	16.5
E.....	23	62	11	9	4	1	8	52	7.7
F.....	37	64	8	9	7	13	22	42	23.8
G.....	31	53	8	6	10	5	13	42	21.4
H.....	64	68	2	6	10	4	52	58	11.3
I.....	42	69	7	11	15	8	20	50	24.7
J.....	45	69	7	12	15	6	23	51	20.0
K.....	20	62	8	3	2	5	10	54	9.8
L.....	30	79	3	4	4	0	23	75	3.9
M.....	62	69	3	4	16	14	43	51	22.5
N.....	53	84	9	10	16	19	28	55	29.6
O.....	63	55	11	7	20	11	32	37	31.0
P.....	48	33	2	1	6	5	40	27	14.1
Q.....	71	42	6	2	12	3	53	37	14.3
Total.....	803	1,149	104	119	169	128	530	912	17.1

The matter was a subject of discussion at the meeting of the Board of Education and several different views were taken both as to the desirability of publishing the report and with regard to the significance of this report as compared with the experiences of other cities. The difficulty of making such a comparison as was desired results from the fact that there is no accessible information from other school systems in this matter.

The *Journal* reports that it called up several school superintendents by long-distance telephone and tried to get some comments on the figures here given. These long-distance telephone reports from Lansing stated in general that the number of Seniors in the high school receiving unsatisfactory marks amounted to 4.5 per cent. Six per cent were unsatisfactory in the Junior class, 10 per cent in the Sophomore class, and 9.7 per cent in the Freshman class. These figures do not give an account of the withdrawals from the school.

From Lapeer, which has a small high school enrolling 175 pupils, the enrolment at the end of the semester is reported as 169, the number who failed in one or more subjects 13, or 6.5 per cent of the students; the number who failed in two or more subjects was 4.2 per cent, giving an average percentage of failure of those enrolled of 1.7 per cent.

Further information of this sort is very much needed for comparative purposes. Attention also turns at once to the large number of failures in mathematics.

MORAL EDUCATION

In connection with the meetings of the Religious Education Association held in Cleveland during the second week of March a conference was called on social education in the high school. This conference met in four sessions and dealt with the various phases of moral instruction and social activity in the high schools. At the first session Professor Sharp of the University of Wisconsin discussed in detail the plan which he has several times presented to high-school teachers for a course of direct moral instruction in the high school. Professor Bigelow gave a paper on sex instruction in which he advocated a very comprehensive treatment of the whole problem. This problem should be dealt with not as a special topic, but there should be a broad, intelligent treatment of all the social relations that attach to this problem. Two principals of high schools gave at later sessions of this conference full account of the social activities going on in their respective schools. These were Principal Johnson of the University High School of the University of Chicago and Principal Davis of the high school at Grand Rapids, Michigan. The

interest aroused by the report of these practical experiments in actual social work with students in high schools was evidenced by the numerous questions that were raised with regard to the possibilities of extension of these lines of work. At the last session the problem of reconstructing the high school in some measure so as to meet the needs of adolescent pupils more adequately on the moral side was discussed by Principal Rynearson of the Pittsburgh High School and Professor Bagley of the University of Illinois.

This series of conferences was preceded by a symposium on the general topic of "Social and Moral Education in the High School," which appeared in the *Journal of Religious Education*. The papers which were presented at the conference will be reproduced in that journal. High-school teachers will find therefore in the current numbers of that journal much material that will be of direct interest to any student of high-school problems.

COLLEGE-ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

A monograph on college-entrance requirements has been issued by the Bureau of Education dealing with all of the different types of entrance requirements represented in American colleges and universities. This pamphlet is prepared by Mr. Clarence D. Kingsley, who is known as the chairman of the National Education Association Committee on the Articulation of High Schools and Colleges. The pamphlet is useful in that it presents in a comprehensive way the great variety of practices in this matter in different institutions. The pamphlet, however, goes farther than merely to present the facts. It advocates a very much more elastic arrangement of entrance requirements than has been heretofore considered possible. The special points on which this pamphlet lays emphasis are the desirability of materially reducing the foreign-language requirement which is very common and the recognition of the vocational and other non-academic courses which the well-organized high school accepts for graduation.

The pamphlet makes it clear that radical and rapid changes are taking place in this matter of college admissions.

LEGISLATION FOR THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF INDIANA

The state of Indiana has adopted a law which provides for uniform textbooks in the high schools of the state. For twenty-four years there have been uniform textbooks in the elementary schools. The recent legislature directs the State Textbook Board to select books in the following subjects: algebra, geometry, commercial arithmetic, history

(United States, ancient, mediaeval, and modern), civil government, commercial geography, physical geography, history of English literature, history of American literature, English composition, Latin. The board shall also select four elective textbooks in each of the following subjects: botany, zoölogy, physics, chemistry, agriculture, and agricultural botany. The board may select single or elective textbooks in any additional subjects not included in the above lists when such subjects are taught in any high school or whenever any high school shall determine to teach such subjects.

This law was passed on the ground that it will tend to furnish a uniform basis for the course of study in the public high schools of the state and will materially lessen the price of books.

The legislature also passed a law known as the high-school inspector's law. This law creates an official to be appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction with the approval of the state board. He will be in general charge of the high schools throughout the state and will secure so far as is possible uniformity in the work of the four hundred commissioned high schools and the one hundred and fifty certificated schools which he is expected to visit each year.

SUMMER SESSIONS OF SCHOOLS

A number of news items similar to the following call attention to the general movement which is developing all over the country for summer schools for special students. "It is reported from Great Falls, Mont., that at last night's regular meeting of the board of trustees of the Great Falls school district it was decided to conduct a summer school during the vacation months for conditioned or failed pupils in both the grades and the high school." This movement to economize time of pupils who find themselves in difficulty with the school program has become sufficiently general to be described as a common matter. There will be many summer schools in different parts of the country. It is very desirable that information with regard to these summer schools be carefully kept so that we may shortly have an exhaustive study of the advantages or disadvantages of this type of work. Sooner or later there will be summer schools conducted for pupils who have not failed. If it is worth while to save the time and energy of those who have found themselves in difficulty with the school program, then certainly it is worth while to economize the time and energy of the pupils who have succeeded with their school work. There is more loss through vacations, there is more failure on the part of children to use their time properly during the

period between school sessions, than can be realized by anyone who has not made a careful study of the general behavior of school children during the summer months. Most of the children in the United States are not on vacation in the ordinary sense of that term. Most of them are obliged to remain near their homes and are very greatly disadvantaged by the withdrawal of educational opportunities. That this should appear first of all in the case of those who are deficient is perhaps natural, but there ought to be a clear recognition of the fact that these special cases indicate a general difficulty which ought to be overcome.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN DENMARK

The Bureau of Education is undertaking a general study of rural conditions and rural schools in all of the civilized countries where progress has been made in educational matters. At the present time a group of representatives of the bureau are studying the folk high schools of Denmark. These folk high schools are special agricultural schools for small landholders. Eleven-day courses are provided for adults. These courses open on the first and third Tuesdays of every month throughout the twelve months of the year. Husbands and wives frequently attend these courses together. Instruction is given in various phases of agriculture and domestic economy. More elaborate courses extending through six months are given in horticulture and other subjects which are needed by the sons and daughters of the small farmers. The movement for the development of rural life in Denmark is very vigorous and these educational institutions constitute one of the agencies employed by the central Danish government in promoting the welfare of the rural population.

CHEMISTRY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

At a meeting of the Teachers' Association of Alabama held during the last week in March the subject of introducing elementary chemistry into the high school and even into specialized industrial schools was taken up. The introduction of elementary chemistry was urged by one of the speakers in the following terms:

The subject is a highly practical and useful science which touches almost every side and phase of our material welfare, whether we consider its relation to the preparation of the foods we eat and the clothing we wear, or whether we investigate its bearing upon the fertilization of our soils, the conversion of some of our crude farm products into materials whose value is thereby enhanced

many fold, or the transformation of the raw mineral wealth of the earth into finished metals and metallic products which find a thousand different applications in our twentieth-century civilization.

Foreign visitors who come to this country frequently call attention to the fact that we have omitted from our high-school organizations one of the types of schools that the Germans have developed as of great importance in their industrial education, namely, schools of chemical engineering. The reason why practical courses in technical chemistry should not be given seems very obscure when one considers such practical reasons for introducing these courses as are above cited. On the other hand, it cannot be doubted that from the psychological point of view chemistry suffers as compared with physics. In physical phenomena one sees the processes which are under investigation. One can see the movement of a physical apparatus. Even in the biological sciences one can observe steadily for a long time the facts of plant growth or animal life. Chemical processes, on the other hand, are not accessible to direct observation as are physical processes, and it is not possible to subject them to continuous observation as one may many biological facts. There is a certain indirect scientific reasoning involved in the understanding of chemical phenomena. This psychological fact may be the real reason why courses in chemistry are not easily introduced into secondary-school courses.

THE IOWA REORGANIZATION OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

The Iowa reorganization is not to be carried out as originally planned by the State Board of Education. During the whole of the present session of the legislature the most vigorous discussions have been carried on touching the rights of the board to make the changes proposed and touching also the wisdom of the changes if they are within the authority of the board. It appears that the board did not adopt the plan with as large a degree of unanimity as was at first supposed. This furnished the way out of the dispute. It is now ordered by act of the legislature that no changes shall be made unless seven members of the board concur. This brings matters back to the organization which existed before the war and each institution for the present, at least, holds its own.

VOCATIONAL COURSES IN NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

A pamphlet entitled *A Novel Experiment* comes to hand from the Newton Vocational School printshop at Newtonville, Massachusetts. Quoting briefly from one of the paragraphs in this pamphlet, we have the

following statement of the problem which is discussed by the teacher who has successfully solved a grave difficulty in our school organization:

When it was found some years ago that in the Newton schools, as in the schools of many other cities, there was in the eighth grade of the grammar grades a rather large number of girls over fifteen years of age for whom there was little hope of promotion to the high school by the ordinary methods of school grading, a special class for these girls was organized in the Newton Technical High School.

This class of transferred girls was made up of about fifty girls who were somewhat over age. Thirty-five out of the fifty pupils were retarded one grade. The causes of retardation as given on the personal record cards which are sent with the pupils from grade to grade and which contain full information about each pupil were, first, sickness by which a grade was lost, second, late entering of school, third, unfortunate home conditions, fourth, slow mental development. The work which was given to these special girls was aimed to arouse their interest and their activity. An effort was made, as the pamphlet tells us, to cause the girls to realize the advantage to be given them in the special class. They took up vocational studies and the vocational aim aroused them to take up other work. They took up work of a practical sort in house-keeping, sewing, millinery, and expense account. Work in hygiene was made very practical and helpful. Commercial geography was given and illustrated by talks with the reflectorscope. All this work was recognized as higher work than carried on in the elementary school, although it did not follow at all the lines of the ordinary high school.

The final comment made in the pamphlet on this type of high school may be quoted as follows:

At last, however, a better time is coming when the word "high" in "high school" will stand not alone for certain work in the classics, sciences, and mathematics, but it will also stand for high achievement in many other lines of effort that lead to the strengthening of character, the brightening of intellect, the developing of skill in preparing for one's work in life.

The experiment here described for girls has already been duplicated in the Newton schools by a similar group of classes for retarded boys. The special interest attaching to this experiment arises from the fact that usually less attention is paid to girls who find themselves unable to go on in the high school than to boys similarly situated.